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Alleged German Atrocities

**ENGLAND'S MOST
EFFECTIVE WEAPON**

**By
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BY J. MATTERN.

Motto: War was declared not only against German soldiers and sailors, but against German reputations.—*The New Statesman*, London, May 29, 1915, p. 176.

THE world has been deluged with stories of alleged German atrocities and with made-to-order evidence of German barbarism and frightfulness. We all know the official reports of the Belgian, French and British "atrocities" commissions, we know Bédier's *German Crimes from German Evidence*, we know Percy Bullen's *The Hun's Diary*, we know J. H. Morgan's *A Dishonored Army*, and many more of like order. But in spite of the generous advertising which all these have received in the magazines and the daily press favorable to the Allies' cause, they seem to have utterly failed in their mission, at least with those neutrals who do a little thinking of their own. The mode of presentation of all of them is too ostentatious, their manner of representation too crude and perverse to gain confidence and command belief with people who, in these troublous times when hysteria seems to be rampant, have preserved at least a grain of common sense, sound judgment and cool reasoning. These atrocity stories as they appeared in hundreds of gaudy and sensational British and French anti-German war books, pamphlets and the like; these official reports distributed by the hundred thousand and reproduced in almost every political and popular journal, did for a time baffle and stir the heart of every neutral, no matter on which side his sympathies were; but the purpose was too manifest and the effort through which the purpose was to be achieved too grotesque to convince others than those who wished to be convinced. Even in the United States, this hotbed

of pro-Allies sentiment, they are taken with a grain or more of salt by all except the editors of that section of the press which is more British than the British themselves.

However it would be saying too much to state that these atrocity stories, whether of private or official manufacture, have entirely failed in their purpose. To be sure, they seem to be performing a valuable service in the countries where they originated, and the assumption seems well warranted that they were, in the last analysis, doctored up for home consumption. At least that is the view one gathers from G. E. Toulmin's revelation in the March number of the *Journal of the Royal Economic Society*. This is what he writes:

"Statesmen [it is English statesmen of whom he speaks] know in their hearts that in order to brave a democracy to bear the terrible losses and sorrows even of triumphant warfare, a mob-instinct of horror and repulsion must be cultivated and maintained. The word 'Germany' must always be used so as to stir up a complex of anger and disgust."

Mr. Toulmin's admission is corroborated by the *New Statesman*, London, May 29, 1915, which, with apparent disapproval, acknowledges that "War was declared not only against German soldiers and sailors, but against German reputations," and that "if the destruction of German reputations goes on much further we [the English, or the Allies, or the world] shall not be surprised to find the followers of the late Mr. Kensit denouncing Martin Luther as a Hun who was secretly in the pay of the Pope."

A drastic example illustrating how these make-believe stories of German barbarism are made use of in England is found in E. J. Balsir Chatterton's *Appeal to the Nation* which has as its object the winning of a million members for his "Anti-German League." These are Mr. Chatterton's "appealing" words:

"Never before in England's history has the nation been faced with problems so grave and complex. We stand, or rather shall shortly stand, at the parting of the ways. On the one hand lies a road to prosperity and Empire—a road we are opening at a sacrifice in blood and treasure, the like of which the world has never seen—on the other, the resumption of a policy of thrift and apathy, which would again permit the Teutonic leprosy to threaten our very existence. . . . When offered goods bearing the mark of the beast, I ask you to think of the vast army of phantom dead, of the poor breastless women, of the outraged girls, of the little children torn to pieces, of our brave soldiers with their faces beaten to a pulp

as they lay wounded, and of the sinking of the *Falaba* with over a hundred innocent passengers, amid the jeers of the fiends on the pirate submarine, and the *Lusitania* with hundreds of helpless victims sacrificed to the bloodlust of the Butcher of Berlin. The time for false sentimentality has gone. It is quite useless fighting savages with silk gloves on. Let us get to business and destroy—destroy first of all the fabrics of their fast approaching commercial supremacy—ostracize them socially as a pestilent and cankerous growth—and, lastly, make it impossible for them, with all their knavish tricks and subtle devices, to ever enter our markets again in unfair competition.”

Thus Chatterton's Anti-German League of a “Million members who will preach the anti-German doctrine all over the country” must represent the German as a “beast,” a “leper,” a “savage,” a “pestilent and cankerous growth,” in order to deter the English from trading with him, while Mr. Toulmin propounds the theory that all trade relations must be and are being broken with the enemy in order that he may effectively be represented as the “barbarian and traitor,” the “plague spot” and what not else. For if trade relations of some kind or other should continue, “the word ‘German’ would be redolent,” so Toulmin concedes, “not of hatred but of profitable contracts”; “the reaction caused by the word ‘Germany’ would be lessened, and a valuable stimulus to self-sacrifice and, in a volunteer country, to recruiting would be lost.”

I have just come across an English pamphlet entitled *The Truth About German Atrocities*, and issued by the “Parliamentary Recruiting Committee.” Was it this pamphlet that inspired Mr. Toulmin's article in the *Journal of the Royal Economic Society*? or was it Mr. Toulmin's article that inspired the Parliamentary Recruiting Committee to issue this pamphlet?

For Chatterton the atrocity bugbear is the means of killing German trade and competition; according to Toulmin trade relations with the Germans must be interrupted so that the English, against their own better knowledge, may be duped into believing the horrible accusations lodged against their enemy and, fortified by holy indignation, bear the otherwise unbearable burden of the war, or, what in sober thought would and could not be expected of them, flock to the colors to fight for a cause which they fail to recognize as their own. On the one point however the two, Chatterton and Toulmin, agree: atrocity stories are a prerequisite without which the English government cannot succeed in its management of the war.

The neutral world, including the United States, with the exception noted above, sees the point and accepts these reports, private and official, of alleged German "outrages, crimes, atrocities, and the like" for what they are worth—"an essential part of the war game." However, most of our esteemed British cousins do not realize such discomfoting facts as yet. They are still busily engaged in manufacturing new "war material of this sort" and still more frantically at work making use of this kind of ammunition, the only kind, by the way, that they seem to be able to produce in sufficient quantities and of effective quality.

Every English or French steamer arriving at New York still brings thousands of copies of anti-German war books, all more or less reveling in vivid and perverse descriptions of improbable or impossible crimes laid at the door of the "Huns" or "Vandals." Hardly an issue of a magazine or paper appears without a "spicy" review or an excerpt from the "choicest" scenes. Most of these atrocity stories are so disingenuous, so cunning in their insinuations, so exaggerated in their coloring of the subject, so clearly designed to appeal to the baser instincts of their prospective readers, in short so revolting to the sense of fairness to be found even in the most biased "anti-German neutral" that they positively defeat their own ends. They need no answer, they answer themselves. In this class belong, in addition to those already mentioned, such books as *The Last of the Huns*, by G. Saunders; *Lest We Forget. An Anthology of War Verses*, edited by H. B. Elliott; *In Gentlest Germany*, by *Hun Svedend*, translated from the *Svengalese* by E. V. Lucas, a miserable parody on Sven Hedin's *With the German Armies in the West*; *German Atrocities*, by W. Le Queux; *La Grande Barbarie*, by Pierre Loti; *The World in the Crucible*, by Sir Gilbert Parker; and many, many more.

Still, occasionally one meets with a spontaneous outburst of a natural, and therefore honorable, indignation springing from an unwarranted, but nevertheless real, belief in what the Germans are charged with. This is the kind of criticism—the only kind that deserves and demands an answer—to which Charles T. Gorham's article in *The Open Court* of September last belongs. When I here mention Mr. Gorham I do so speaking of him as a type, and it is in that sense that I shall refer to him in the following. I have stated that I consider Mr. Gorham's indignation natural and honorable, and his belief in the causes for his indignation unwarranted but real. Indeed so childlike seems to be his faith in the Bryce report, that any attempt to shatter his confidence assumes the aspect of an

atrocities of the blackest type. With admirable earnestness he claims that "according to the investigations which have been made [by the Bryce Commission] the charges brought against the Belgians are false, the charges against the Germans are true." But how does the Bryce report prove the charges against the Germans and disprove the charges against the Belgians? By testimony taken under oath? No! "The depositions"—so we read in the introduction to the report—"were in all cases taken down in this country [England] by gentlemen of legal knowledge and experience, though of course they had no authority to administer an oath." Are the names of the unsworn witnesses given? No! "Many hesitated to speak"—so the excuse runs—"lest what they said, if it should ever be published, might involve their friends or relatives at home in danger, and it was found necessary to give an absolute promise that names should not be disclosed." This excuse appears in a rather peculiar light when we consider that most of the witnesses examined by the Belgian and French Commissions did not manifest such tender considerations for their relatives, nor even for themselves.

Thus the Bryce report cannot, as far as its evidence is concerned, even be compared with the reports of the Belgian and French commissions, of which the latter at least claims to be founded "chiefly on photographs and on a mass of evidence received in judicial form, with the sanction of an oath."

But even of these Belgian and French reports a reputable and distinguished countryman of Mr. Gorham, the English labor leader Ramsay MacDonald, wrote as follows: "The use that is being made of the words 'cruelties' and 'atrocities' is in my opinion to be condemned severely. In the first place the so-called documentary proofs of the Belgian and French commissions are no proofs at all. It is absolutely impossible to state accurately what takes place, when one is in the midst of terrible experiences with nerves strung to the highest pitch and the ability to observe carefully and clearly utterly destroyed. A dreadful death becomes a cruelty, and imagination takes the place of observation. I know that, if I myself had undergone what some of these poor people must have suffered, my report of the facts would be neither trustworthy nor objective. It would only describe how the horrors had affected my mind. In addition to this we have had so many cases in which apparently indisputable proof was produced, that nevertheless were pure invention or received another and quite satisfactory explanation, that even the seemingly most trustworthy statements are not always to

be accepted. It is astonishing that legal authorities, Belgian and French—and later even English—have set their names to these reports of cruelties,—reports made under conditions under which even the best judge would give up all pretence of being able to give a clear presentation of the facts. That cruelties, brutalities and atrocities have occurred is self-evident; that the German army is responsible for the greater part of these is likewise a matter of course, for the obvious reason that the localities were for it an enemy's country. But to use these things, which are inseparably connected with war and which have been reported of every army operating in the field, as a means of stirring up hate between the nations and of prolonging the conflict, is abominably devilish and must be condemned by every right-thinking man." According to the *War Chronicle* for February last this letter appeared in the *Voix de l'humanité* published in Lausanne, and it appeared in English, not in French, because Macdonald's views "are decidedly opposed to the point of view of most of its [the *Voix de l'humanité*'s] collaborators, and in order to avoid any mistake in their interpretation."

The same adverse criticism applies, of course, to the Bryce report, and, for reasons enumerated above, to a much greater degree. Yet on the strength of this report Mr. Gorham makes the amazingly-naïve and sweeping statement that "the charges brought against the Belgians are false, the charges against the Germans are true."

What are the charges brought against the Belgians? I quote from the German *White Book on the Belgian People's War*:

"Immediately after the outbreak of the war in Belgium a savage fight was started by the Belgian civilians against the German troops, a fight which was a flagrant violation of international law and had the gravest consequences for Belgium and her people."

The chief incidents of this "savage fight by the Belgian civilians against the German troops" took place at Aerschot, Andenne, Dinant and Louvain. About eighty depositions by German officers and men, every one sworn before a military court the names of whose members, moreover, are given for every case, prove beyond the possibility of doubt that the German charges against the Belgians are justified. In spite of this I shall not, and need not, ask Mr. Gorham, or anybody else, to accept even such sworn proof, coming as it does from the German side. I shall instead offer the testimony of an American, Lieutenant-Colonel Edwin Emerson. His testimony was given voluntarily during an illustrated lecture arranged under the auspices of the German-American Trade Association of Berlin.

Colonel Emerson, being on leave of absence, felt free to express his opinion without restraint, and in the presence of the American ambassador, the consul-general and the larger part of the American colony made the following statement:

"Inhabitants of Louvain admitted to me themselves that their firing at the Germans had been a terrible mistake. They would not have done it, they told me, had they not been secretly informed from Antwerp that a sortie from that city had been successful, and that the Germans were in full retreat on Louvain. When then a small column of tired-out German soldiers happened to enter Louvain that same evening, the deluded populace thought that they were part of the completely routed and fleeing troops of the German army, and at once opened fire upon them. I would here, as a military man, further say that, if I were in war and a hostile civilian population were to fire on my troops, I should proceed in the same way as the Germans did in Louvain. Our American soldiers always did the same in the Philippines. As a literary man I naturally regret that the historically valuable library in Louvain happened to be burned, with other buildings, but in war, fire and sword are always at work, and regrettable losses of valuable things take place in all belligerent countries. I was in Vera Cruz this last spring when our American marines completely destroyed the valuable library of the Mexican Naval Academy. Our officers of course regretted this afterwards very much." (From D. A. W. War Tracts, No. 7.)

But Colonel Emerson, because he spoke at the German capital and because he may be suspected of German leanings, may not prove convincing to some who were not present at his lecture. So I shall let E. Alexander Powell, war correspondent for the *New York World*, relate his experience on the same subject. This is what he witnessed and relates in his work, *Fighting in Flanders*, a book which is anything but a hymn to the Germans:

"We started early in the morning [Powell and Van Hee, the American vice-consul at Ghent, to take dinner with General von Boehn]. . . . And though nothing was said about a photographer, I took with me Donald Thompson. Before we passed the city limits of Ghent, things began to happen. Entering a street which leads through a district inhabited by the working classes, we suddenly found our way barred by a mob of several thousand excited Flemings. Above the sea of threatening arms and brandished sticks and angry faces rose the figures of two German soldiers, with carbines slung across their backs [not directed at the mob], mounted

on horses which they had evidently hastily unharnessed from a wagon. Like their unfortunate comrades of the motor-car episode, they too had strayed into the city by mistake. As we approached, the crowd made a concerted rush for them. A blast from my siren opened a lane for us, however, and I drove the car alongside the terrified Germans. 'Quick!' shouted Van Hee in German. 'Off your horses and into the car! Hide your rifles! Take off your helmets! Sit on the floor and keep out of sight!' The mob, seeing its prey escaping, surged about us with a roar. For a moment things looked very ugly. Van Hee jumped on the seat. 'I am the American consul!' he shouted. 'These men are under my protection! You are civilians [!] attacking German soldiers in uniform. If they are harmed your city will be burned about your ears.' At that moment a burly Belgian shouldered his way through the crowd and, leaping on the running-board, levelled a revolver [!] at the Germans cowering in the tonneau. Quick as a thought Thompson knocked up the man's hand, and at the same instant I threw on the power. . . . It was a close call for every one concerned, but a much closer call for Ghent; for had those German soldiers been murdered by civilians in the city streets no power on earth could have saved the city from German vengeance. General von Boehn told me so himself." (Chapter V, "With the Spiked Helmets," pp. 110-112.)

Still more conclusive than Mr. Powell's anti-German contribution is what I have the pleasure of offering in the following quotations from Belgian, yes Belgian, newspapers, in which the participation of Belgian civilians in the fighting against German troops is heralded and praised as the highest form of duty and patriotism.

Gazette de Charleroi, August 11, 1914:

"The spirit of our revolutionary war is awakened in our districts. A wave of heroism animates our souls. On the roads one meets youths and grown men, some armed with old muskets, others with shotguns, many with revolvers."

Het Handelsblad of Antwerp, August 6, 1914:

"Like madmen and without mercy they fought, and a certain part of the population of the lowlands, whose peaceful labors on the fields are disturbed, was seized by a veritable fury to defend the soil of the fatherland against the treacherous Prussians. . . . From cellar windows, from holes made in the roofs by the removal of tiles, from private houses, from farm buildings and huts, a furious fire was opened against the storming Uhlans and the Schleswig troops."

Journal de Charleroi, August 10, 1914 (from the report of a war correspondent):

"Returning from Brussels I came to Waterloo and there I found the entire population in arms; some had muskets, of one description or another; others pistols, revolvers or simply sticks and pitchforks; even the women were armed."

De Nieuwe Gazet, August 8, 1914:

"The civil population fires on the invaders:"

"In Bernot the vanguard [of the Germans] became involved with the citizens, who, like madmen, shot at the invaders from the roofs and windows of their houses. Even women took part in the shooting. An eighteen-year-old girl with a revolver shot at an officer . . . The peasants and inhabitants maintained a regular fire with the advancing Germans."

In Bédier's *German Crimes from German Evidence* we find the following passage from the diary of an unnamed German soldier:

"Thus we destroyed eight houses, with the inhabitants. From one house alone two men with their wives and an eighteen-year-old girl were bayoneted (*erstochen*). I took pity on the girl, her face appeared so innocent, but we could do nothing against the excited mob (*Menge*), for on such occasions (*dann*, i. e., under such conditions) men are not human beings but beasts."

What, I ask, becomes of this passage, so convincing to Bédier, in the light of the preceding confessions of the *Nieuwe Gazet*?

But to return to the subject, there are more such Belgian confessions.

Journal de Charleroi, August 8, 1914:

"The resistance offered to the enemy by our peasantry is proof of its patriotic feeling. The indignation at the invasion of Belgian territory, which has seized all hearts, has aroused our entire people and has united them with our troops. . . . Our peasants are ready for the greatest sacrifices."

La Métropole, Antwerp, as late as October 7, 1914:

"To arms! Every able-bodied man take his gun [a gun, or the gun]. Do not serve the barbarians! Go at the enemy!"

These quotations from Belgian newspapers are taken from Richard Grasshoff's *Belgiens Schuld. Zugleich eine Antwort an Professor Waxweiler*, Berlin, Georg Reimer, 1915. They are, as

Grasshoff states, only a few of the many in his possession, but these few speak loud enough, these few indeed suffice to invalidate all the Belgian and French and English official reports to the contrary.

And having seen the Belgian civil population convicted by the testimony of Emerson, Powell and their own newspapers of all that the German *White Book* has charged them with, we shall consider what Mr. Gorham ventures to say on the same subject. Thus he writes:

"Before the entry of the Germans into Belgium, orders had been given in every town, village and district of that country that all arms were to be delivered up to the authorities. The evidence shows that these orders were faithfully complied with.... In any case the fact of the official order to deliver up arms and the compliance therewith show that no forcible resistance by non-combatants was sanctioned or contemplated. The evidence proves that none took place."

Here I rest my case. Let the reader be the judge. I am ready to accept the verdict.

The next logical step then would be to admit that the punishment meted out to the "maddened Belgian civilians shooting from houses, from roofs, from cellar windows," a punishment which I concede was a terrible one, was retributive and not provocative. Hence Mr. Gorham's accusation that "the German troops left their own country provided with the means for the deliberate commission of cruel outrages" should be amended to read: "The German troops left their own country provided with the means for the deliberate commission of relentless retribution for unlawful attacks by the civil population of any of the enemy countries." Those ingenious stories that "drunken" or "mischievous" German soldiers had fired the same shots that were laid at the door of innocent Belgian civilians, on the one hand rest on what unnamed and unsworn refugees express as their belief, not their knowledge, and on the other hand are refuted by the sworn testimony of German officers and men whose name and rank are given and who are all in complete agreement as to the details of the occasions on which such shooting is supposed to have occurred.

However Mr. Gorham is of the opinion that, even if Belgian civilians had done all the Germans accuse them of having done, "a generous foe would have dealt leniently with them" and "certainly he would not have avenged himself upon innocent children." Since particulars of this alleged vengeance practised upon innocent children are not furnished by Mr. Gorham we have to search for such

elsewhere. Document *a* 33 of the Bryce report relates the following:

"Two of the [German] privates held the baby, and the officer took out his sword and cut the baby's head off...."

The Belgian refugee relating this supposed incident in the course of his examination, and referring to the shooting of the mayor of Cornesse in whose village a German soldier had been wounded by civilians, expressed himself in the following manner:

"They found him and placed him against a wall in the courtyard of the school, and four or five German soldiers shot him. He was only hit in the legs, and a German officer came up and shot him through the heart with a revolver. He was an old man and quite deaf. I do not know what his name was. I never heard whether it was true that the German soldier had been shot by an inhabitant of Cornesse; some said it was true and some said it was not. Some people even said the soldier had shot himself so as not to be obliged to fight any more."—"Some said—and some said not"! This is the quality of the testimony upon which the Bryce report is based, and on the strength of such pseudo-testimony—commonly called gossip—the world is asked to believe that three German soldiers, one of them an officer, are capable of murdering an "innocent baby."

On this kind of testimony the London *New Statesman* of January 30, 1915, makes some pertinent remarks which deserve to be reproduced in this connection. The *New Statesman* says:

"What puzzles one in the whole business is the way in which evidence in support of things which have not happened [that is, stories of German atrocities] is invented among perfectly honest people. It is partly, we think, because the majority even of honest people do not hesitate to modify the nature of the evidence as they pass it on. One man passes something on to a friend as a piece of hearsay; the second relates it as something which a friend of his actually witnessed; the next man to hear the story makes it still more dramatic by declaring that he saw the thing himself. And even the third of these men may be, comparatively speaking, honest. He is frequently one of those persons subject to hallucinations, who believe they have been present at what they merely heard about, just as George IV firmly believed that he had fought at the battle of Waterloo."

Referring to the stories of Belgian children being mutilated by the Germans the *New Statesman* in the same issue has this to say:

"It is the same with the myth of the Belgian mutilations. It

was impossible to meet any one who did not know somebody—or at the very least who did not know somebody who knew somebody—who had seen the child with his or her own eyes. Every suburb of London, every town, every village, almost every vicarage, had its Belgian child *sans* hands, *sans* feet. One knew people who knew people who could vouch for it on the very best authority. The mutilated children had been sent in trainloads to Paris and in boatloads to England. To doubt a man's Belgian child soon became as serious a matter as to doubt his God. . . . Now the real sufferings of Belgium it would be almost impossible to exaggerate, and the story of those sufferings is an infinitely longer and more horrible story than the most longwinded or Sadistic version of the mutilated Belgian child. But apparently the public had to get into its mind some drastic representation of all that horror, some representation which would be an easy and stimulating substitute for the prolonged study of hundreds of thousands of scattered facts. The Belgian child gave the public what it wanted—one of those favorite symbols in war-time when men like to picture themselves as the knights of God, fighting against devils more atrocious than the Devil." Thus the *New Statesman*, more effectively than a thousand sworn denials could have done, disposes of the myth of the "Belgian child *sans* hands and *sans* feet." Likewise, it disposes just as effectfully of the baby-killing related in document *a* 33; of the incident quoted by Mr. Gorham, where "a child of two years. . . . while standing in the street of Malines, was transfixed by a brave German soldier with his bayonet and carried off on the weapon, a song on the lips of its murderer"; of the case found on page 57 of Le Queux's *German Atrocities*, where it is alleged that "the lancer took up his lance and ran it through one of the little girls who was walking along, clutching the hand of her mother. She was a fair-haired girl of about seven or eight years of age"; in short, it disposes of all of them.

But there is one other kind of accusation in Mr. Gorham's arraignment of the German conduct in Belgium, and that is one which I would prefer not to touch, were it not that silence might be construed as admission. "What can you say"—Mr. Gorham asks—"of the public violation of fifteen women in the square of Liège, in the presence of and begun by officers? You will, I trust, disapprove of the appalling savagery deposed to by witnesses *a* 33, *d* 118, *d* 133, and above all, *d* 86. These incidents are so horrible that it must have needed some resolution to print the accounts; but there are hundreds of others nearly as bad!" I volunteer to

add that a still greater resolution is required to read them, provided of course that the imagination of the reader is not already "tuned up" to such a pitch of sensualism by the reading of Emile Zola's or, worse yet, the Marquis de Sade's works. I shall further add that it was accusations of this kind, and the manner of their presentation, that I referred to as perverse and revolting. That there are in an army of millions—be they Germans, Russians, French, or even the purest of the Puritan English—some whose animal instinct is stronger than discipline, self-control and respect for the sex that brought them into this life and has given or is to give life to their own children, no one but a hypocrite will deny. But that things should or could have happened as they are related in documents *a* 33, *d* 118, *d* 133 and *d* 86 is impossible to believe, especially on the basis of such flimsy testimony as furnished in these documents. That the severest penalty is meted out to any soldier or officer who so far forgets himself as to violate or to attempt to violate a woman, is well known and need not be re-asserted here. That the threatened punishment is being and has been meted out to culprits is equally certain.

Mr. Powell in his *Fighting in Flanders*, Chapter V, p. 126, attributes to General von Boehn the statement that "of course, our soldiers, like soldiers in all armies, sometimes get out of hand and do things which we would never tolerate if we knew it," and that "at Louvain, for example, I sentenced two soldiers to twelve years' penal servitude each for assaulting a woman."

Another case of this kind is cited in one of the diaries, alleged to have been found on German dead and prisoners and published by Bédier. The diary in question is that supposed to be written by private Z (more of his name is not given). "Unfortunately"—so the passage reads—"I am obliged to mention something which should never have happened. . . . Last night a man of the *Landwehr*, a man of thirty-five, and a married man, attempted to violate the daughter of a man in whose house he had been quartered; she was a child; and as the father tried to interfere he kept the point of his bayonet on the man's breast." Here ends Bédier's French translation, but the photographic reproduction of the supposed original writing of private Z continues thus: "Is such a thing possible? But he [the German soldier] is awaiting his due punishment." Why did Bédier suppress these two sentences? Because they defeat any attempt to lay these sins at the door of the German authorities.

For the benefit of Mr. Gorham and his kin I refer to Robert J. Thompson's book, *England and Germany in the War*. Mr.

Thompson was American consul at Aix-la-Chapelle when the war broke out. "Because of the [United States state] department's instruction to make neither investigations nor reports on the serious—and at that time acute—subject of military reprisals"—so he writes in the introduction to his book—"I have withheld all of my observations and reports until my resignation would give me freedom to speak fully and in direct accordance with the facts." In the chapter on "Atrocities on the Field and in the Press" he records the "nurse-with-her-breast-cut-off-by-German-soldiers" story which originated in Edinboro, and he reminds his readers that the "girl who concocted it has since been convicted by the courts of that good town." Mr. Thompson is of the opinion that "the sentence should have included a goodly number of London editors and American correspondents," and he regrets that "unfortunately for the peace of mind of the world, the court fell short of convicting, for libel, the perpetrators of the alleged crime, but rendered judgment because of the grief the girl had caused the parents of the mis-treated nurse who, strange enough, was her own sister."

Of late, various efforts have been made to accentuate the alleged barbarous methods of the present-day Germans by holding them up in contrast with the more human methods of their fathers in the Franco-Prussian war. In one of these attempts the writer, one Courtney Kenny, expresses himself as follows:

"The atrocities committed by the Kaiser's troops in Belgium, which are awakening the indignation of the world, afford a startling contrast to the conduct of the fathers of those troops during the invasion of France in 1870. In your issue of October 17 [*The Spectator*] you cite from Sir Thomas Fraser a testimony that the French peasants of 1870 could give their German invaders the credit of 'respecting the women, and doing what was wanted in the way of help.' In more than one invaded part of France I used to hear ladies give similar testimony as to 1870, conceding that their invaders behaved far better than French troops would have done if they had captured German towns. But a more striking testimony fell into my hands by accident recently when I came upon the address which Max Müller delivered before the Germans of London at their festival of peace on the conclusion of the war with France (May 1, 1871). He says in the course of it: 'In no war has there been so little unnecessary cruelty; in no war has every crime been punished so severely: in no war has humanity achieved such triumphs. We are prouder of these triumphs than of all the triumphs of our arms.'" (*The Spectator*, November 14, 1914.)

And still, even in 1870-71 the fathers of the present-day "barbarians" fared no better at the hands of some of their critics. I have before me a book, *The Crime of War*, by His Excellency, John Baptist Alberdi. . . . sometime minister plenipotentiary of the Argentine Confederation to the the courts of Great Britain, France and Spain. From the introduction we learn that the book was written in 1870 and from the title page, that it was printed in 1913 at London and Toronto, by J. M. Dent & Sons. As far as its contents are concerned it might have been written last month, and its author might have been one of our present-day English writers, be it our friend, H. G. Wells, one of the Chestertons, Gilbert Parker, or some other. In proof of my assertions I submit the following quotations:

"It is in the least civilized part of the world that Germany's example in the present war of 1870 will bring about as many evils as in France, by the sanction it gives, in the name of civilization, to the barbarism with which war is waged by less civilized countries" (p. 283).

"Prussia, for example, may gain much in this war which she is waging in 1870; but all her territorial conquests will never be of sufficient value to compensate for what she loses in the opinion of the civilized world, for her acts of incendiarism, and the requisitions, and the firing at and bombardment of inoffensive towns" (pp. 304-305).

"The announcement which the King [in 1870] made in his proclamation inaugurating the war, declaring that he was waging warfare on the army, not on citizens, was taken as a humanitarian favor done to the latter; but, in its application, quite the contrary has happened, since the citizen has been treated worse than the soldier. The military man has been treated as a public enemy, but the citizen as a common criminal, because he performed his patriotic duties of a Frenchman, in a twofold character of franc-tireur and citizen, by defending his country; it matters not in what garb or clothing. To make of the Frenchman's patriotism—which is a virtue—a common crime, is the height of the immorality with which a great country can tarnish its military policy" (pp. 305-306).

Here we have an analogy to the case of Germany's alleged unwarranted cruelties against the "innocent Belgian civilians" who, as some say, did not shoot at all, or as other will have it, if they shot, were right in doing so. Substitute Belgium for France, Belgian for Frenchman, and the analogy becomes an identity. And accepting His Excellency's indictment of the Germans of the Franco-

Prussian war at the same value at which Mr. Gorham accepts the Bryce report, or bringing both down to the same level on which all these private and official atrocity stories must appear in the light of the foregoing argument, one is in fact utterly at a loss to decide whether the "Huns" of 1914-15 are actually any worse than their more humane fathers of 1870-71, or whether the latter were actually in any way better than their much maligned epigones of to-day. I must let the reader wrestle with this momentous question and leave him to find the answer for himself.

Closing my "humble" attempt to show things as they are and other things as they are not, I quote an oracle attributed to Anatole France. Quoth he:

"The Germans have robbed the profession of arms of every vestige of humanity. They murdered peace, now they are murdering war. They have made of it a monstrosity too evil to survive."

To this I add, in form of comment, a single prayer: May they succeed in murdering—or as I would express it—in abolishing war! If they do, mankind will hail and bless them for all the ages to come.

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